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excellent habit of body, and such sound health as most Europeans might envy. Many diseases which afflict and exhaust Europeans are not even known by name amongst them. Gout, dropsy, epilepsy, jaundice, stone, &c. are words foreign and monstrous to their ears. They expose their bare heads for whole days to the heat of the sun, and yet you never hear one of them complain of head-ache. You would swear they were devoid of feeling, or made of brass or marble; yet even these grow hot when acted on by the rays of the sun. After having been long parched with thirst in dry deserts, they drink large draughts of marshy, salt, muddy, stinking, bitter water, without injury. They greedily swallow quantities of hard, half-roasted beef, venison, tiger's and emu's flesh, and the eggs of the latter, without experiencing any consequent languor of the stomach, or difficulty of digestion. They often swim across vast rivers in cold rainy weather without contracting any ill affection of the bowels or bladder, which was often troublesome to the Europeans in swimming, and, if succeeded by strangury, dangerous. They ride seated on saddles made of hard leather during journeys of many weeks, and yet such long sitting does not injure the external skin even. They are unprovided with stirrups, and often use trotting horses, yet after many hours of uninterrupted

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147 riding you can perceive no signs of fatigue or ex-
[493] haustion in any of them. Stretched on a cold
[164] turf, should a sudden shower descend, they pass
the night swimming in water, yet never know
what the colic or the gout is. The Spaniards run
the risk of both after being long drenched with
rain water, which, when it touches the skin, af-
fects the body most terribly in America, often
producing syncope, and sometimes pustules and
ulcers. I have frequently seen Spanish soldiers
faint in the church from having been wetted
147 with rain on their way thither. The Abi-
[291] pones pass many days and nights amid constant
rain uninjured, because their feet are bare; for
the moisture contracted from rain hurts the feet
when they are wrapt up more than when they
are uncovered; as, finding no vent when it
exhales, it creeps inwards, penetrates the bones
and nerves, and affects the rest of the body in a
terrible manner. But I can give you further
proof of the strength of the Abipones.

If a thorn of any plant happens to stick in
their foot, and to break there, so that it cannot
be dullad out by the finger, they will coolly
cut the little piece of flesh, to which the thorn
adheres, with a knife. When they go out to
[493] act the part of spies, or to reconnoitre distant
places, they sit with both feet upon the horse's
back. They climb high trees, and sit quietly

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dered that such children should be as imbecile in mind as in body.

Their education also conduces greatly to form the manners and strengthen the bodies of the Abipones. For, as Quintilian observes, in his first book of Institutes, that soft kind of breeding, which we call indulgence, relaxes all the nerves both of the mind and body. No one can object to the education of the Abipones on account of its delicacy. The children are plunged into a cold stream, if there be one at a convenient distance, as soon as they see the light. They know of no such things as cradles, feathers, cushions, swathing-clothes, blandishments, and toys. Covered with a light garment of otters' skins, they sleep wherever chance directs, and crawl upon the ground like little pigs. Whenever a mother has to take a journey on horseback, she places the child in a bag made of boars' skins, and suspended from the saddle along with the puppies, pots, gourds, &c. The husband will often come and snatch his little son, as he is sucking, from its mother's arms, set him on his own horse, and behold him riding with eyes sparkling with pleasure. When a mother is swimming in a river for the sake of a bath, she presses her infant to her breast with one hand, while she uses the other as an oar. If the child be pretty big, it is thrown into the

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night-fall an Abiponian boy brought an iron bridle, an axe, and some other trifles, the treasures of his family, to be guarded in my house. On being asked the reason of his doing so, he replied that the enemies would arrive in the night; for so it had been predicted by his mother, a famous juggler, who declared that whenever the enemy was approaching, she felt a pricking sensation in her left arm. "Oh!" replied I, "you may attribute that to the fleas, my good lad. I can tell you this on my own experience. Day and night I feel my left and my right arm too, as well as other parts of my body, insolently pricked and stung by fleas. If that were an indication of the enemy, we should never be free from their attacks night or day." But my words were vain; for the report of the old woman's presage got abroad, and disturbed the whole town all night. Yet, as often happened, no sign or vestige of the enemy appeared.

The Abipones, whom the desire of booty or glory induces to be constantly scheming war against others, are, in consequence, never free from suspicions of machinations against themselves. The more ardently they desire to take measures for their safety, the more readily do they believe themselves in danger from others, and generally for some foolish reason.

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and travel about continually. Neither rugged roads, nor distances of places, prevent them from a journey; for both men and women travel on horses which are swift and numerous there, and if they are in haste, traverse vast tracts of land every day. I shall now describe the equipment of the horse, and the method of riding. The bit which they use is composed of a cow's horn fastened on each side to four little pieces of wood placed transversely, and to a double thong which supplies the place of a bridle. Some use iron bits, of which they are very proud. The major part have saddles like English ones, of a raw bull's hide stuffed with reeds. Stirrups are not in general use. The men leap on to their horse on the right side. With the right hand they grasp the bridle, with the left a very long spear, leaning upon which they jump up with the impulse of both feet, and then fall right upon the horse's back. The same expedition in dismounting, which would excite the admiration of a European, is very useful to them in skirmishes. They use no spurs even at this day. For a whip, they make use of four strips of a bull's hide twisted together, with which they stimulate new or refractory horses to the course, not by the sense of pain, but by the fear excited by the cracking of the whip. The

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saddles used by the women are the same as those of the men, except that the former, more studious of external elegance, have theirs made of the skin of a white cow. When an Abiponian woman wants to mount her horse, she throws herself up to the middle upon its neck, like men in Europe, and then separating her feet on both sides, places herself in the saddle, which has no cushion; nor does the hardness of it offend her in journeys of many days; from which you may perceive that the skin of the Abipones is harder than leather, being rendered callous by their constantly riding without a cushion. Indians who ride much and long without saddles, frequently hurt and wound the horse's back, without receiving any injury themselves. I will now describe their manner of travelling when they remove from one place to another. The wife, besides her husband's bow and quiver, carries all the domestic furniture, all the pots, gourds, jugs, shells, balls of woollen and linen thread, weaving instruments, &c. These things are contained in boar-skin bags, suspended here and there from the saddle; where she also places the whelps, and her young infant if she have one. Besides these things, she suspends from the sides of the saddle a large mat, with two poles, to fix a tent wherever they like, and a bull's hide to serve for a boat in crossing rivers.

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No woman will set out on a journey without a stake, like a palm branch, broad at each side and slender in the middle, made of very hard wood, and about two ells long, which serves admirably for digging eatable roots, knocking down fruits from trees, and dry boughs for lighting a fire, and even for breaking the heads and arms of enemies, if they meet any by the way. With this luggage, which you would think a camel could hardly carry, are the women's horses loaded in every journey. But this is not all. You often see two or three women or girls seated on one horse: not from any scarcity of beasts, all having plenty, but because they are sworn enemies to solitude and silence. As few horses will bear more than one rider, unless accustomed to it, they immediately throw the female trio, but generally without doing them any injury, except that these Amazons, when seen sprawling like snails upon the ground, excite the mirth of the spectators, and amidst mutual laughter, try to scramble again on to the rustic steed, as often as they are thrown off.

The company of women is attended by a vast number of dogs. As soon as they are mounted, they all look round, and if one be missing out of the many which they keep, begin to call him with their usual *nè nè nè*, repeated as loud as possible a hundred times, till at last they see them all assembled.

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thrown by way of ballast, in the midst of which the person that is to cross the river, sits, taking care to preserve his balance. Into a hole in the side of the pelota, they insert a thong instead of a rope, which a person, swimming, lays hold of with his teeth and with one hand, whilst he uses the other for an oar, and thus gently draws the pelota along the river, without shaking or endangering the person within in the least, though a high wind may have greatly agitated the waves. If the coldness of the water cramps the man that drags the pelota, so that he is disenabled from swimming, and would otherwise be drowned, he will be carried safely along with the pelota to the opposite bank, by the force of the waves. If rivers of a wider channel and a more rapid stream are to be crossed, the swimmer holds the tail of the horse, which swims before, with one hand, to support himself, and drags the pelota with the other. In so many and such long journies, I practised this sort of navigation almost daily, and not unfrequently repeated it often on the same day. At first it appeared very formidable and dangerous to me. But instructed by frequent practice, I have often laughed at myself and my imaginary danger, and always preferred a hide in crossing a river, to a tottering skiff or boat, which is constantly liable to be

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overturned. If many days' rain has wetted the hide, and made it as soft as linen, boughs of trees are placed under the four sides, and the bottom of the pelota, which supports the hide, and strengthens it to cross the river in safety. American captains of Spanish soldiers will not swim, although they know how, that they may not be obliged to strip before their men. To reach, therefore, the opposite shore, they sit upon a pelota, which, scorning the assistance of another person, they impel forwards by two forked boughs for oars.

The Abipones enter even the larger rivers on horseback: but when the ford begins to fail, they leap from their horse into the water. With their right hand they hold the reins of the horse, and row with the same; in their left they grasp a very wide spear, at the end of which they suspend their clothes in the air, that they may not be wetted. Every now and then they give the horse a blow, if he suffers himself to be carried down with the stream, to bring him back to the right course, and make him strain to the appointed part of the opposite shore, which should be neither marshy nor weedy, nor of a very high bank, so that it may afford an easy ascent. It was laughable to see the crowds of savages swimming at my side, with nothing but their heads above water, yet conversing as plea-

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will not suffer a female infant, a few months old even, to remain naked. We have often vainly desired to see this decency imitated by the Spaniards in Paraguay, especially those of the cities Asumpcion and Corrientes. How often do grown women allege the excessive heat of the sun as an excuse for throwing off their clothes, without the least regard to modesty, in the public street! For this they are frequently reprehended by preachers, both in public and private. Do you wish to be made acquainted with the kind of clothing which the Abipones wear? They use a square piece of linen, without any alteration, or addition of sleeves, thrown over their shoulders, tying one end of it to the left arm, and leaving the right disengaged. They confine this woollen garment, which displays various colours, and flows from the shoulders to the heels, with a woollen girth. In leaping on to a horse, they keep back their dress with their knees, that they may not be quite bare: for they know of no such things as shoes, stockings, or drawers, and are for that reason better prepared to swim rivers, and ride on horseback. Besides this vest which I have described, they throw another square piece of linen over their shoulders, by way of a cloak, which, tied in a knot under the neck, both defends them against the cold, and gives them a

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unknown to the Abipones, and quite unnecessary to them. Boys and girls not unfrequently pilfered melons grown in our gardens, and chickens reared in our houses. but in them the theft was excusable; for they falsely imagined that these things were free to all, or might be taken not much against the will of the owner. Though I have enlarged on the native virtues of the Abipones more than it was my intention to do, I shall think nothing has been said till I have made a few observations relative to their endurance of labour. Who can describe the constant fatigues of war and hunting which they undergo? When they make an excursion against the enemy, they often spend two or three months in an arduous journey of above three hundred leagues through desert wilds. They swim across vast rivers, and long lakes more dangerous than rivers. They traverse plains of great extent, destitute both of wood and water. They sit for whole days on saddles scarce softer than wood, without having their feet supported by a stirrup. Their hands always bear the weight of a very long spear. They generally ride trotting horses, which miserably shake the rider's bones by their jerking pace. They go bareheaded amidst burning sun, profuse rain, clouds

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147 ried industry. They despatch the household bu-
461 siness with which they are daily overwhelmed,
with alacrity and cheerfulness. It is their task
to make clothes for their husbands and children;
[462] to fetch eatable roots, and various fruits from
the woods; to gather the alfaroba, grind it, and
convert it into drink, and to get water and
wood for the daily consumption of the family.
[887] A ridiculous custom is in use amongst the Abi-
pones, of making the most aged woman in the
horde provide water for all domestic purposes.
[892] Though the river may be close at hand, the
water is always fetched in large pitchers on
horseback, and the same method is observed
in getting wood for fuel. You will never hear
one of these women complain of fatigue, however
many cares she may have to employ her mind.
A noble Spaniard had a captive Abiponian wo-
man in his service many years, and he assured
me that she was more useful and valuable to
him than three other servants, because she an-
ticipated his orders, and did her business sea-
sonably, accurately, and quickly. They justly
795 claim the epithet of the *devout female sex*. No
562 sooner do they hear the sound of the bell than
they all fly to hear the Christian religion ex-
plained, and listen to the preacher with attentive
ears. They highly approve the law of Christ,
because by it no husband is allowed to put

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pools and rivers; to take a survey of the spot; to examine the tall grass, decayed trunks, and recesses of shrubs and rocks, before they sat or lay down. The Indians, who neglect these precautions, are constantly liable to the bites of serpents. Throwing themselves carelessly on the ground, they sleep soundly without a fear or a thought about serpents, and are often awakened with a scream by the bite of one. When travelling bare-footed they employ their eyes in watching birds in the air and monkeys in the trees, when they ought, at every step, to examine the dangerous ground they are treading. The Abipones, from being an equestrian people, and more circumspect, seldomer suffer from serpents than the Guaranies, who always walk on foot, and use less caution. In the town of St. Joachim, where the climate is very hot, and the land is surrounded with marshes, rivers, and woods, venomous animals are unusually numerous. Scarce a week passes that some Indians are not bitten by serpents. During the eight years that I spent in this town a vast number of persons were bitten by various serpents, but, with the exception of two youths who were killed by a rattle-snake, not a single individual died: all were healed by the use of one and the same remedy. Now listen attentively whilst I make you acquainted with that

[302] THEY STAIN THEIR FACES WITH VARIOUS COLORS, TO EXCITE TER-
[237] ror, and for the same purpose some wear a
714 crown of parrots' feathers, others a red cap
726 sparkling with beads of glass, or snails' shells, and others again place an enormous vulture's wing on their heads. I knew an Abipon who wore the skin of a stag's head, branching with horns, by way of a helmet, whenever he was going to fight, and another who tied the beak of a tunca to his nose before he entered into an engagement. I always observed that those persons who were most solicitous about rendering their persons terrible to others, had the least courage themselves. The most intrepid, neglecting these precautions, await the weapons of the enemy quite undefended, though they always paint their faces. All sit half naked on the bare
• 492 back of the best horse they possess, and, in place
726 of a bridle, use a thong fastened to the animal's jaws. They throw away all heavy things, and whatever may retard the speed of the horse, that they may be able to make or avoid an attack with more celerity.

726 The most favourable time for an assault, in their apprehension, is either the beginning or end of the day, when there is just light sufficient to enable them to distinguish all objects. For at dawn or twilight they find more men at home to slay, and those oppressed with sleep: whereas in the day they are generally absent on busi-

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rive no benefit from them, though they soon after break them to pieces, or throw them into some river. 727

Whenever the Abipones think fit to attack the bands of the Spaniards, they rush upon them on their horses, not in close ranks, like the Europeans, but in various parties, so that they can attack their adversaries at once in front, behind, and on both sides, and extending their spears above their horses' heads, kill all they meet. They strike a blow, but that they may not receive one in turn, leap back as quick as they came, and presently resuming courage, return again and again into the ranks. Every one is his own leader; every one follows his own impulse. They can turn their horses round in various circles, with the utmost swiftness, having them wonderfully under their command. They can suspend their bodies from the horse's back, and twist them about like a tumbler, or, to prevent themselves from being wounded, conceal them entirely under the horse's belly. It is by this art chiefly that they escape the leaden bullets of the Spaniards; for by continually changing their position, they deceive and weary the eye of him that is taking aim at them with a gun. They condemn the stationary fighting of the European soldier, and call it madness in a man to stand and expose his 726 [492]

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an hour, that it is time to desist, by repeated precussion of their lips, and by pronouncing the little words *Kla leyà*, it is enough. With this admonition, they immediately comply, and conclude the magnificent commemoration of their mighty deeds with *Gramackka akaml:* Such then we are. Another pair then succeeds to the former, and in this manner the singing is protracted till the morning. Then, indeed, the scene is changed, the drinking commences, and their dry and weary throats are refreshed with that American nectar made either of honey, or the alfaroba. The women, and the unmarried men are excluded from these drinking-parties, though the latter are allowed to drink mead in private, as the women to drink pure honey, and eat the raw alfaroba.

To seek honey in the woods for making this drink, is the business of the men, but the whole labour of preparing it falls upon the women, who have to knock down the alfarobas from the trees, to carry them home on horseback, to pound them in mortars, to pour water on them, and to dress the hides which serve to hold the liquor. The method of their construction is this: the feet are cut off, the hide is made square; its four sides are then raised to the height of two spans, so that it receives at the bottom any liquor that you may pour in, and holds it without spilling a drop.

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coals, and, that the heat and smoke may be the more intolerable, the poor wretches are completely overwhelmed with palm leaves. They anoint the whole of the body of others with honey, tie them to a tree, and expose them to the stings of bees, wasps, drones, and hornets. But let me now return to the Abipon who is fasting and keeping silence at home. On the evening preceding this military function all the women flock to the threshold of his tent. Pulling off their clothes from the shoulder to the middle, and dishevelling their hair, they stand in a long row, and with confused shouts, accompanied with the sound of gourds, and with the continual agitation of their arms and legs, lament for the ancestors of him, who is, next day, to be adorned with a military dignity. These lamentations continue till it is dark. As soon as morning dawns, our candidate, elegantly dressed in the fashion of his nation, and holding a spear in his hand, leaps upon a horse laden with feathers, small bells, and trappings, and gallops northward, followed by a great troop of Abipones. Presently, returning with equal speed, he approaches the tent, where sits an old female juggler, the priestess of the ceremonies, who is afterwards to inaugurate the candidate with solemn rites. Some woman of noble birth officiously holds his spear and the bridles of his